

**REMARKS**

Claims 11-15 are now pending in the application. Claims 1-10 have been canceled. Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

***I. INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT***

Submitted herewith is an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) referring to six references cited in corresponding Japanese Patent Application No. 10-349741.

***II. CLAIM AMENDMENTS***

Claims 1, 5, 6 and 8-10 have been replaced herein with new claims 11-15. New claims 11-15 take into account changes made during the prosecution of the above-mentioned corresponding Japanese patent application.

***III. REJECTION OF CLAIMS***

Claims 1, 5, 6 and 8-10 now stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a). Claims 1, 5, 6, 8 and 10 are rejected based on Yamamoto et al. in view of Ikenoue et al. Claim 9 is rejected based on Yamamoto et al. and Ikenoue et al., and further in view of Hisatomi et al. Withdrawal of each of these rejections insofar as the Examiner may now apply them to claims 11-15 is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

Claim 11 refers to an image forming apparatus for forming an image based on image data inputted from an arbitrary image output apparatus. The image forming apparatus includes a first interface to which image data is inputted along with identification information which identifies an image output apparatus; and a second interface to which image data containing identification pattern which identifies an image output apparatus in a predetermined position is inputted. A confirming process for a first identification information in relation to image data inputted from the first interface is performed. In addition, a confirming process for a second identification information in relation to image data inputted from the second interface is performed. A process for an image formation based on the inputted image data is inhibited in a case where

identification information is not confirmed in each confirming process for the identification information.

JP 6-326854 (submitted herewith) is now perhaps most relevant to the claimed invention, at least as compared to Yamamoto et al., Ikenoue et al. and Hisatomi et al. JP 6-326854 teaches that in a case where an external apparatus (i.e., host computer) outputs an image signal to an image processing apparatus (i.e., copying machine), identification information for identifying the external apparatus is transmitted along with the image signal. The image processing apparatus adds the identification information as a specific pattern to an image and outputs the image. In the case where the identification information is not transmitted along with an image signal, an output from the image processing apparatus is inhibited.

JP 6-326854 discloses three configurations. The first is a configuration in which a pattern based on identification information which identifies a supplying source of image data is added to an outputted image. The second is a configuration in which an invisible pattern that specifies a model of a copying machine is added to the outputted image. The third is a configuration in which copying operation stops in response to an image output demand from the external apparatus which does not provide identification information.

The image forming apparatus of claim 11 differs from JP 6-326854 and the other references cited in the IDS, as well as those relied upon by the Examiner. Claim 11 includes the aforementioned first interface, second interface, and a mutually different process for identification information for each image data inputted from the first interface and the second interface is performed. The different confirming process for identification information is performed according to whether the image data is inputted via the first interface or the second interface. On the basis of the process result, it is possible to determine surely whether an image forming process is performed or not.

Therefore, according to the invention of claim 11, by performing a process according to an interface in which the image data is inputted with regard to the image data outputted from several kinds of image output apparatuses which have different adding status of identification information, even when the image data is inputted from

various types of image output apparatuses, it becomes possible to inhibit surely the image forming process in relation to the image data which can not specify an image output apparatus.

In the references cited in the IDS and Yamamoto et al., Ikenoue et al. and Hisatomi et al., there is no teaching or suggestion with respect to an inhibiting function in which an image forming process of the image data which can not specify an image output apparatus is surely inhibited, in the case where image data is inputted from various types of image output apparatuses, as recited in claim 11.

Furthermore, there is no teaching or suggestion of the features of claim 12, that is, with regard to the image data inputted from the first interface. A confirming process for confirming whether or not the identification information is inputted along with the image data for a predetermined period of time is performed. With regard to the image data inputted from the second interface, a confirming process is performed for confirming whether or not the identification information exists in the predetermined position of the image data.

Similarly, there is no teaching or suggestion of the features of claims 13-15. As a result, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Accordingly, all claims 11-15 are believed to be allowable and the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

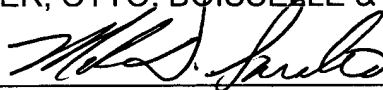
Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Serial No.: 09/456,670

Should a petition for an extension of time be necessary for the timely reply to the outstanding Office Action (or if such a petition has been made and an additional extension is necessary), petition is hereby made and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees (including additional claim fees) to Deposit Account No. 18-0988.

Respectfully submitted,

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